

# BCTGM *News*

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# *the* PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE THE POWER OF **America's Freedom Fighters**

Throughout recent history, monumental changes in the workplace and society can usually be traced to a defining event that sparked powerful worker reaction.

In 1937, auto workers in Flint, Michigan became fed up with an oppressive employer and refused to work. They initiated the "sit down" strike which led to the mass unionization of industrial workers around the country for decades to come.

In 1955, a working woman in Montgomery, Alabama became fed up with the pain of racial discrimination and refused to move to the back of the bus. That single act of courage opened the door to the eventual enactment of historic Civil Rights legislation and an end to the evil of segregation in America.

In 1980, an electrician in Poland became fed up with the miserable life for workers under government dictatorship and led a strike of thousands at the shipyard where he worked. That strike helped bring down Communism in Eastern Europe.

The common thread in all of these acts of defiance is the desire on the part of workers to realize dignity, justice and respect on the job and in their daily lives.

Today, extreme right-wing governors like Scott Walker in Wisconsin, John Kasich in Ohio, Mitch Daniels in Indiana, Rick Snyder in Michigan, Rick Scott in Florida and Paul LePage in Maine and their accomplices in state legislatures use the cover of budget deficits to strip away workers' rights. Publicly, they deny this is their goal. Privately, they proudly boast about it.

But these governors are not operating alone or in a vacuum. They are working in concert and doing the bidding of their multinational corporate benefactors and some of the richest, most anti-union individuals in America who provide them with tens of millions of dollars in campaign contributions.

These corporate elite saw in the outcome of the 2010 elections an opportunity to regain control over government policy that would allow them, once again, to rob our country blind. They know that organized labor is the only institution that stands in the way of achieving that goal. That is why they have declared war on unions and workers' rights.

But this lust for power and hideous greed is being met with a resistance from working people not seen in this country in more than 80 years.

Over the past three months, workers in those states, union and non-union alike, from both public and private sector, have come together in extraordinary numbers to defend workers' rights. They have been eagerly joined by senior citizens, college students, civil rights activists and citizens from all walks of life in a remarkable display of people power.

Their resolve has inspired workers across the country to stand up and speak out loudly for workers' rights and a new freedom from corporate greed and control over our quality of life.

The labor movement, led by the AFL-CIO, has come together in true unity and with a renewed sense of purpose to seize this moment in history on behalf of American workers and the middle class. The BCTGM is proud to be in the forefront of labor's counterattack.

Our Union is committed to seeing this fight through. We are devoting the resources necessary to win this war, because we simply cannot afford not to. Nothing less than our ability to exist as an effective representative of workers is at stake.




But we must be careful to recognize that this will be a long, difficult struggle, unlike any political campaign that ends on a certain day. Labor's response to possibly the greatest threat in our history must be steady and resolute. It requires a sustained, broad-based approach. This means all International Unions and every local union must do their part.

If we are successful, I believe the extraordinary response in the Spring of 2011 by working people in Wisconsin to the stripping away of workers' rights by a corporate-controlled, power hungry governor and like-minded state legislators, will someday be seen in a similar light as those historic events cited at the outset of this column.

To our members and their families, I ask that we come together in solidarity with union members and workers everywhere to ensure the freedom of association for future generations of Americans.

**Frank Hurt**

BCTGM International President

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10401 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, Maryland 20895-3961  
(301) 933-8600  
[www.bctgm.org](http://www.bctgm.org)

**Frank Hurt**, Editor  
**Corrina A. Christensen**, Assistant Editor

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**M**ore than 1,200 We Are One solidarity actions were held throughout the nation in March and April in support of workers in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and everywhere middle-class jobs are under attack. On April 4, We Are One events coincided with the 43rd anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in Memphis, Tenn., where in 1968 he was helping sanitation workers fight for justice, workers' rights and a voice on the job.

The attack on middle class families in state after state proves that this isn't about the economy, a state budget, or helping business thrive. "It's all about politics and payback," says BCTGM International President Frank Hurt. "It's a payback to corporate extremists who want to weaken the voice of millions of workers and middle class families."

According to AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, "Just about every bill imaginable that undermines working people and our unions has been piled onto a legislative calendar somewhere."

Hurt asked BCTGM local unions and members to get involved in We Are One solidarity actions within their respective communities. BCTGM members responded by participating in numerous solidarity actions throughout the country.

A steady rain didn't dampen the spirits of BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) members who joined several hundred other union activists who turned out April 4 in downtown Portland for an AFL-

# WE ARE ONE

## Reverberates Across Nation



L. 33G members attend "Stand Up for Hoosiers" rally outside the Indiana Statehouse to protest that state's anti-union legislative proposals. Pictured here (from left to right) is member Mike Lowell, Vice Pres. Rich Evans, Pres. Roger Miller, Rec. Secy. Lillie Clark, Fin. Secy. Mike Miller and member Kevin Korte.



At the April 4 solidarity rally in Portland, Ore. is (from left to right) L. 114 Pres. Georgene Barragan, Gino Barragan, L. 364 member Victor Weeks, Ed Hall (Labor Liaison for Senator Merkley), L. 114 member Shad Clark, Intl. Rep. Eric Anderson, L. 114 Bus. Agt. Terry Lansing, L. 364 member Cameron Taylor, (kneeling) L. 114 member Andrew Stern and daughter Ruby.

CIO solidarity rally. According to Local 114 Business Agent Terry Lansing, the rally included a protest against the Koch brothers and a call for the continued support for public employees under attack nationwide.

In Indiana, BCTGM Local 33G (New Albany, Ind.) attended a "Stand Up for Hoosiers" rally in Indianapolis to protest the so-called "Right-to-Work" bill and other legislation proposed by the state's anti-worker, anti-union Republicans. According to the Indiana State AFL-CIO, the 36 straight days of protests outside the Indiana Statehouse were the longest and largest sustained protests in the state's history.

In Findlay, Ohio, BCTGM members attended a April 4 event at the Steelworkers Local 207L union hall. Union members gathered there to sign petitions to repeal Ohio Senate Bill 5. The new law, passed in late March, restricts the bargaining rights of roughly 350,000 teachers, firefighters, police officers and other public employees. It will take the signatures of 230,000 registered voters in order for a referendum to appear on the November ballot.

The Findlay event also included Hearthside Food Solutions' workers Gracie and Terry Heldman, who detailed the nine-year struggle to join the BCTGM by workers in McComb, Ohio.

Part of the April 4 events included support for workers, like the Heldmans, who are trying to join a union for a better life.



# **‘Labor Law Still Matters,’ NLRB Chairwoman Says**

**W**hile collective bargaining is under attack in many parts of the country, it remains one of the few effective ways to preserve the American middle class, the chairwoman of the National Labor Relations Board said.

The NLRB administers federal law safeguarding the rights of private sector workers to organize unions and bargain contracts. Wilma Liebman, with nearly 14 years on the NLRB, is one of its longest serving members. President Obama named her chairwoman in 2009.

Liebman spoke March 31 at the University of Minnesota Law School, where she discussed the history and role of the National Labor Relations Board. Noting the turmoil that has erupted from Wisconsin to New Hampshire over the question of worker rights, she wished the debate “were less rancorous,” but added, “It has brought [collective bargaining] back into the public eye, the public discourse.”

## **‘Product of fierce battles’**

While hundreds of thousands have mobilized for rallies and other events sparked by the current debate, the conflict over worker rights is nothing new, Liebman said.

“The NLRB is no stranger to controversy,” she said. “The law is the product of fierce battle, some of them quite bloody.”

In 1935, when Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act and created the NLRB, most workers had no right to a voice on the job. During the worst economic depression in U.S. history, millions marched in the streets, occupied factories and some died in the struggle to win collective bargaining rights.

“It’s worth remembering why Congress did what it did at that time. The Act was seen as a means of restoring the country to economic prosperity by restoring the purchasing power of wage earners.

“The law really worked for the first few decades. Millions of people achieved a middle class way of life through collective bargaining in major industries.”

Workers’ ability to achieve gains began to unravel, however, first through Congressional action and later through economic change. In 1947, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act, weakening some of the labor protections contained in the NLRA.

And in recent decades, the growth of a global economy, overseas competition, new technology and deregulation have created new pressures on both management and labor, leading to major drops in union membership and ramping up employer opposition to unions.

## **‘Not keeping up’**

Today, many types of workers, such as independent contractors, now fall outside the protections offered under federal labor law.

“It’s fair to say the law did not keep up with all these changes,” Liebman said.

Despite efforts “to reinvigorate the law” in the 1970s and more recently through the Employee Free Choice Act, it has not been amended since Taft-Hartley. Each attempt gets bogged down in partisan and ideological division.

At times, the five-member NLRB has been nearly immobilized as appointments were held up in Congress or left unfilled. For 27 months during the Bush administration, Liebman and one other board member issued rulings and tried to carry on normal business, despite three vacancies. The U.S. Supreme Court later decided they did not have the authority to act and the board—now with four members—has to revisit many of those decisions.

**[collective bargaining] remains one of the few effective ways to preserve the American middle class.**

Even though the National Labor Relations Act states it is national policy to encourage the practice of collective bargaining, “I don’t think there is really a consensus of what the statute is all about,” Liebman said. “There are still people in the business and legal community who never accepted the legitimacy of this law in the first place.”

In recent decades, many NLRB and related court decisions have focused on individual—as opposed to collective—rights, she said.

Despite being told that labor law is “dead, dying, ossified, neutered,” Liebman holds out hope. “My answer to it all is, ‘I’m not dead yet.’”

She said the board is making modest gains in keeping the law “relevant and dynamic” by issuing a new rule requiring all employers to post worker rights notices in the workplace—something never mandated before—and by making use of tools such as injunctions to prevent the most serious abuses.

“I think that labor law still matters very much in this country. The rights contained in this statute are enduring values. They are now recognized around the world...[and are] critical to a fair economy.”

*The above article was written by Barb Kucera, editor at [www.WorkdayMinnesota.org](http://www.WorkdayMinnesota.org).*

# TASTY BAKING WORKERS Ratify First Contract

**W**orkers at Tasty Baking Company in Philadelphia ratified their very first union contract on April 9.

Workers at the company, which was founded in 1914, have never been represented by a union. That all changed in August 2010 when Tasty Baking Company's 243 bakers, warehouse workers, food-safety technicians, auto mechanics, and vending drivers voted to become members of BCTGM Local 492 (Philadelphia).

"Workers were extremely pleased with the contract proposal," says International Representative Jim Condran, who led negotiations. "I presented the contract by reading and explaining every Article. I opened up the floor and answered all questions and handed out a hard copy to every member before the secret ballot vote was held," Condran explains. Local 492 President/Business Agent John Lazar assisted Condran throughout the negotiations.

The four year agreement was overwhelmingly approved by the Local 492 members.

"This company has been non-union throughout its long history.

This is monumental. The company has not only agreed to maintain jobs in Philadelphia—but to also expand with new union jobs," Condran adds.

Included in the contract is a union label agreement that will see the BCTGM Union Label printed on all products produced at the Philadelphia facility. Other significant gains include:

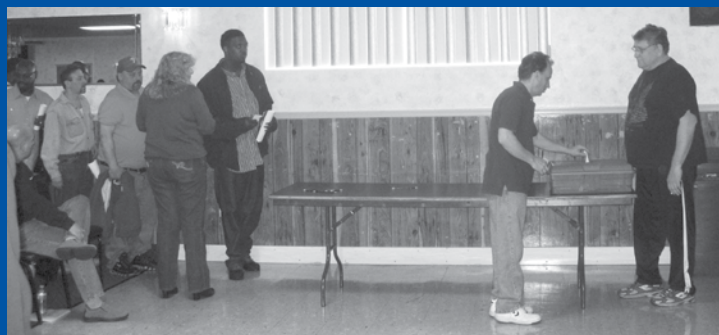
BCTGM-PAC checkoff; technology and training language; new employee orientation; grievance and arbitration language; improvements in bereavement leave; removal of attendance points and written warnings; worker shoe program; night differential pay; paid steward training; job bidding by seniority; strong seniority language; elimination of temporary employees effective 12/31/12; strong part time language that allows them to become full-time; additional holiday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday; severance pay and a 401(K) Plan.

"Additionally, any work performed by a worker that extends beyond eight hours per day will be paid time-and-a-half. This was significant for workers," notes Condran. Before this first contract, workers were required to work more than 40 hours before receiving overtime pay.

Workers will not have an increase in their health care contributions and the contract improves dental benefits. Also included in the agreement is significant wage increases for both full and part time workers throughout the life of the contract.

"This is an excellent contract in general—but even more outstanding that it is a first contract," notes BCTGM International President Frank Hurt. "It stands as a tribute to the hard work and skills of a dedicated negotiating committee. I commend everyone for their hard work and welcome Tasty Baking workers into our union."

*Tasty Baking workers were very pleased with their first union contract with the BCTGM.*



Workers voted by secret ballot after Intl. Rep. Jim Condran explained each detail of the contract and answered all questions.



The four year agreement was overwhelmingly ratified by the L. 492 members. It was the first union contract for Tasty Baking workers in the history of the company.



# The Triangle Fire:

When word got out in early March that Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker had ordered the windows of the state Capitol building bolted shut during the ongoing protests against his attacks on public employees, it was a chilling reminder of a similar action by the employers of the Triangle Shirtwaist factory.

Nearly 100 years ago to the day of Walker's order—which he rescinded after public outrage—146 workers, mostly young immigrant girls, jumped to their deaths from the 10-story building, unable to escape a fire because factory foremen had locked all the doors. The owners, Isaac Harris and Max Blanck, worried the workers would steal from the company.

Hyman Meshel worked on the eighth floor. When the rescue crew found Meshel, who was still alive, **the flesh of the palms of his hands had been torn from the bones by his sliding down the steel cable in the elevator, and his knuckles and forearms were full of glass splinters from beating his way through the glass door of the elevator shaft.**

Thirty dead bodies clogged the elevator shaft. All were young girls. Among the many victims, the *New*

*York Times* reported the day after the disaster, were two girls:

**charred beyond all hope of recognition, and found in the smoking ruins with their arms clasped around each other's necks....**

Three weeks before the Triangle conflagration, the Protective League of Property Owners had held a meeting, indignant over orders by Fire Commissioner Rhinelander Waldo to install sprinklers in warehouses. Owners claimed the order amounted to a “confiscation of property.” The League wasn’t the only employer group to put profit over safety. As the *New York Times* reported, Fire Chief Edward Croker:

**spoke bitterly of the way in which the Manufacturers’ Association had called a meeting in Wall Street to take measures against his proposal for enforcing better methods of protection for employees in case of fire.**

His department had cited the Triangle building for lack of fire escapes just one week before the fire.

The working conditions at Triangle and other apparel factories had spurred tens of thousands of shirtwaist workers from more than 500 factories to walk off their jobs in November 1909. Led by the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), they demanded a 20 percent pay raise, a 52-hour workweek and extra pay for overtime. They also called for adequate fire escapes and open doors from the factories to the street. By February 1910, most of the small and midsized factories, and some of the larger employers, had negotiated a settlement for higher pay and shorter hours. One of the companies that refused

to settle was the Triangle Waist Company, one of New York’s largest garment makers.

The Triangle fire resulted in enactment of stricter job safety and health regulations in New York and across the country. The ordeal of the victims, who are remembered here by Cornell University, has inspired countless memorials, tributes and documentaries, beginning April 30, 1911, when 50,000 New Yorkers marched behind empty hearses to memorialize those killed in the fire.

On March 25, we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire. It is sobering to realize many of the lessons we thought had been absorbed must be re-learned again. And again. The Triangle fire, a symbol of unfettered Gilded Age greed, still stands burning before us—from lack of job safety and health protections, to neglect of the conditions endured by immigrant workers to the fundamental ability of workers to form unions and bargain for a better life.

The following perspectives highlight how the issues behind the Triangle fire still have not been resolved.

## JOB SAFETY AND HEALTH

Last April, 99 years after the Triangle disaster, 29 miners were killed at West Virginia’s Upper Big Branch mine in an explosion that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) says could have been prevented if the mine had been in compliance with federal mine safety rules. Massey Energy, the mine’s owner, had a significant history of safety violations.



of thousands—of state residents to protest the move. He and others spent the night at the Capitol to ensure the governor didn't shut them out, in addition to taking part in rallies during the state's bitter winter. The Wisconsin uprising

The coal industry isn't the only one where U.S. workers die at work. In 2008, 5,214 workers were killed on the job, another 50,000 workers died from occupational diseases, and at least 4.6 million workers were reported injured. The disasters last year that killed those miners could have been avoided had lawmakers resisted lobbying by mine owners, says Peter Dreier. Dreier, who teaches politics and chairs the Urban and Environmental Policy Department at Occidental College, says that today,

**the leading foe of reform is the United States Chamber of Commerce, which is on a crusade against the Obama administration's plans to set new rules on unsafe workplaces, industrial hazards and threats to public health. The Chamber's most vocal proponent is Darrell Issa, the conservative California Republican who chairs the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. At the request of the Chamber and other industry lobbies, Issa recently launched a congressional assault on safeguards in workplaces and communities.**

In a piece on Triangle, Dreier and Donald Cohen, director of the Cry Wolf Project that counters



attempts to discredit progressive policies, writes that Republicans in Congress are

**proposing to cut OSHA's budget by 20 percent, which, coming on top of decades of cuts, would cripple an agency that has been effective at significantly reducing workplace injuries and deaths.**

A century after the Triangle fire, "we still hear much of the same rhetoric whenever reformers seek to use government" to get businesses to act more responsibly and protect consumers, workers and the environment.

### **FREEDOM TO FORM UNIONS**

When newly-elected Republican Gov. Scott Walker proposed taking collective bargaining rights away from Wisconsin public employees early this year, Chad Goldberg joined tens of thousands—sometimes hundreds

lasted for more than five weeks, sparking solidarity rallies across the country and generating support from as far away as Egypt and Australia. Goldberg, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, notes the bitter irony that on the 100th anniversary of the Triangle fire, "Walker is turning the clock back in Wisconsin, refusing to work with unions or allow public employees to bargain over working conditions.

"The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire showed what can happen when employers refuse to work with unions," says Goldberg, vice president of United Faculty & Academic Staff (UFAS), AFT Local 223.

*This piece was written by AFL-CIO Managing Editor Tula Connell and published on the AFL-CIO Blog, <http://blog.aflcio.org>. It is reprinted with permission.*

# Still Burning 100 Years Later

# SAFE JOBS SAVE LIVES

## OUR WORK'S NOT DONE.

Forty years ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality—winning protections that have made jobs safer, saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of workplace injuries and illnesses.

But our work is not done. Many job hazards are unregulated and uncontrolled. Some employers, like Massey Energy and BP, cut corners and violate the law, putting workers in serious danger and costing lives. Each year thousands of workers are killed and millions more are injured or diseased because of their jobs.

The Obama administration has moved forward to strengthen protections, with tougher enforcement on serious violators and proposed new safeguards for workplace hazards. But business groups and the new Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives are attacking these stronger measures and trying to roll back existing protections, falsely claiming they kill jobs. They are trying to slash the budget for job safety enforcement and standards.

We cannot and will not let them turn back the clock and destroy the progress we have made to make jobs safer and save lives. Safety laws and regulations don't kill jobs—but unsafe jobs do kill workers.

On April 28, the BCTGM joins with all of the unions of the AFL-CIO in observance of Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job and to

groups and the new Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives are trying to block stronger measures and roll back existing protections. It is time to organize, take action and fight for safe jobs for workers, including:

» Defending safety and health protections and workers' rights from industry attacks.

...business groups and the new Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives are trying to block stronger measures and roll back existing protections.

renew the fight for safe workplaces. This year on the 40th anniversary of OSHA, we will fight to create good jobs in this country that are safe and healthy. We will fight for the freedom of workers to form unions and, through their unions, to speak out and bargain for respect and a better future. We will demand that the country fulfill the promise of safe jobs for all. Our work's not done.

Decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in significant improvements in working conditions. The Obama administration has moved forward to strengthen worker protections. But business

» Requiring employers to find and fix hazards and implement worksite safety and health programs to prevent injuries, illnesses and deaths.

» Implementing new workplace safeguards for silica, combustible dust and infectious diseases.

» Prohibiting employer policies and practices that discourage reporting of workplace injuries.

» Taking measures to protect workers from ergonomic hazards that still cripple and injure more workers than any other workplace hazard.

» Increasing attention to the safety and health of Hispanic and immigrant workers, who are at much greater risk of death and injury.

» Implementing stronger protections for miners, including tighter standards for coal dust to protect against Black Lung.

» Passing the Protecting America's Workers Act to provide OSHA protection for

all workers who lack protection, stronger criminal and civil penalties for companies that seriously violate job safety laws, and improved anti-retaliation protections for workers who raise job safety concerns.

» Restoring workers' freedom to have a voice on the job, and to freely choose to join a union without employer interference or intimidation.

Safety laws and regulations don't kill jobs—but unsafe jobs do kill workers.

## One Year Anniversary of Upper Big Branch Explosion

**On April 5, 2010, 29 coal miners were killed in an explosion at a West Virginia mine that had a long and troubling record of safety violations.**

Yet a year after the Massey Energy Upper Big Branch mine disaster, we still don't have a definitive answer as to exactly what happened nor exactly who was responsible for the deadly blast that federal mine safety officials say was "preventable." But Mine Workers (UMWA) President Cecil Roberts says, "there are things we do know" about the nonunion mine.

"We do know that the mine's owner, Massey Energy, operated the Upper Big Branch and other mines with an attitude bordering on contempt for mine safety and health laws and regulations. We do know that the mine's head of security has been indicted for lying to investigators and trying to destroy evidence," says Roberts.

In the wake of the disaster, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) launched a series of surprise, hard-nosed "impact" inspections aimed at mines with a history like Upper Big Branch's of safety and health violations and other issues.

The Upper Big Branch disaster spotlighted why stronger safety standards and tougher penalties—criminal and civil—are needed and how companies can game the system with multiple appeals of violations delaying sanctions and allowing unsafe conditions to continue.

Legislation to strengthen mine safety laws was approved by the House Education and Labor Committee last summer. But in December, Republicans blocked the bill that would have given MSHA powerful new tools to keep miners safe and hold mine operators accountable for putting their workers in danger.

Labor Secretary Labor Hilda Solis in a recent column in the *USA Today* on the one year anniversary of the explosion wrote, "But to truly make mines safe for miners, we need additional tools that only Congress can provide. That includes stronger criminal penalties for operators that deliberately disregard health and

safety standards in mines, and protecting whistle-blowers who report hazards.

"In the end, we must be empowered to change the culture in some parts of the mining industry, because our inspectors cannot be in every mine, every hour, every day," concluded Solis.

While the Upper Big Branch explosion highlighted the need for strong mine safety laws, it also brought strong scrutiny of longtime Massey CEO Donald Blankenship, who has made a career of busting unions, violating mine safety laws, attacking environmentalists and shilling for the far right and corporate America.

Blankenship took over leadership of Massey in 2000, and under his leadership, Massey became one of the most dangerous coal companies in the nation—55 miners were killed in Massey mines in the decade Blankenship was in charge.

In July 2010, Blankenship, who long derided the need for tough federal mine safety laws, claimed the Upper Big Branch blast was an unavoidable act of God, not the result of lax safety. Yet in 2009 alone, federal mine inspectors issued 515 safety violations at the Upper Big Branch mine. Those included about 50 for what are called "unwarrantable failures"; in other words, safety hazards the company knew about but didn't fix.

In December 2010, in what industry observers said was a move to turn down the heat on the company from federal regulators and make Massey more attractive to possible suitors, Blankenship resigned. In February, Alpha Natural Resources bought Massey for \$8.5 billion.



**MOURN  
FOR THE DEAD  
FIGHT  
FOR THE LIVING**  
WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY • APRIL 28 • AFL-CIO

# UNIONS ESSENTIAL

## for Rebuilding U.S. Middle Class

Unions are essential for building a strong middle class—and rebuilding the middle class is key to restoring the U.S. economy, according to a new report.

“Unions Make the Middle Class,” released on April 4 by the Center for American Progress Action Fund, (CAP) points out that unions make the middle class by ensuring workers have a strong voice in both the workplace and in our democracy. The study found when unions are strong they are able to ensure that workers are paid fair wages, receive the training they need to advance to the middle class, and are considered in corporate decision-making processes.

Unions also promote political participation among all Americans, and help workers secure government policies that support the middle class, such as Social Security, family leave, and the minimum wage.

Across the globe, the countries with the strongest middle classes all have strong union movements. In this country, the states with higher concentrations of union members have a much stronger middle class. The ten states with the lowest percentage of workers in unions all have a relatively weak middle class, the report says. In fact, each percentage point increase in union membership puts about \$153 more per year into the

pockets of the middle class, the report found.

Yet, over the past four decades, union membership has declined as business and its political allies changed the legal and political environment to prevent private-sector workers from freely exercising their right to join a union.

Without the counterbalance of workers united in unions, the middle class withers because the economy and politics tend to be dominated by the rich and powerful, which in turn leads to an even greater flow of money in our economy to the top of income scale, the report says.

Unions also give workers a greater voice not only by promoting political participation among all Americans and by being an advocate on behalf of the middle class in the daily, inner-workings of government and politics, according

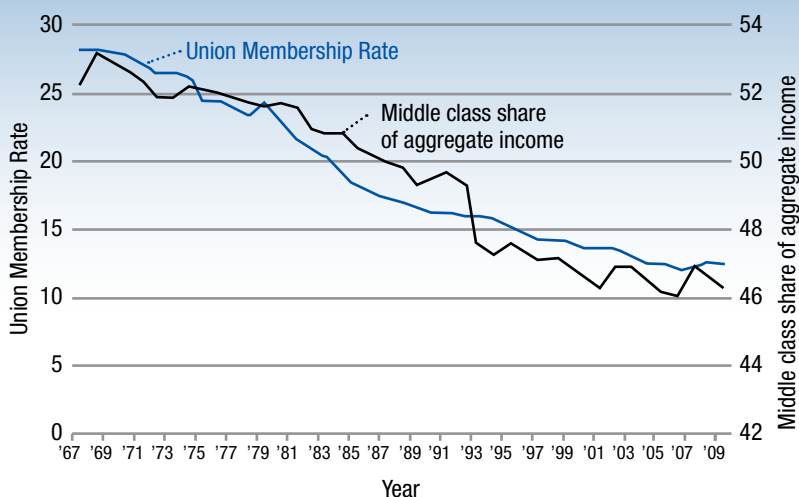
to the report. This provides a check on other powerful political interests, such as corporations and the very wealthy, and ensures that our system of government has a balance of interests.

**Unions make the middle class by ensuring workers have a strong voice in both the workplace and in our democracy.**

The report’s authors conclude, “The challenge of rebuilding the middle class will take a long time, but would be impossible without a clear understanding of what makes the middle class strong. To rebuild America’s middle class, we need to rebuild the labor movement. It’s that simple—and that challenging.”

### Ties that Bind

As union membership rates decrease, middle class incomes shrink



Sources: Union Membership Rate is from, “Estimates of Union Density by State,” Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 124, No. 7, July 2001. Middle Class Share of Aggregate Income is from United States Census Bureau.

# CEO Pay Soars...

**A**t a time when millions of Americans are trying to save their homes from foreclosure and millions more are trying to hold onto their jobs, paychecks for top American executives are soaring again, with corporate CEOs making as much today as they were before the recession began.

According to a recent article in the *USA TODAY*, median CEO pay jumped 27 percent in 2010 as the executives' compensation began to increase toward prerecession levels. Workers in private industry, meanwhile, saw their compensation grow just 2.1 percent in the 12 months ended December 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

While companies claimed to have scaled back amid tough economic times, it proved temporary as three-quarters of CEOs got raises in 2010—and, in many cases, the increases were considerable.

The significant pay increases came despite the economy's frail recovery, continued high unemployment and flat corporate profits.

The *USA TODAY* reported that CEO pay in 2010:

- **Climbed back toward pre-recession levels.**

Median CEO pay in 2010 was \$9.0 million, based on 158 Standard & Poor's 500 index companies with the same CEO serving all of 2009 and 2010 that have reported CEO pay, according to the *USA TODAY* analysis of data from Governance Metrics based on proxies that have already been filed.

- **Bounced back in a big way.** CEOs' 2010 median pay jumped 27 percent from \$7.1 million in 2009, one of the largest increases in recent history. The jump was a complete reversal from 2009 and 2008, when most CEOs took a small pay cut.

- **Delivered big bonuses.** CEOs received a median of \$2.2 million from bonuses, up 47 percent from \$1.5 million in 2009.

- **Set up for an even bigger payday in the future.**

CEOs saw the estimated future value of stock and options awards soar in 2010, with the median value gaining 32 percent to \$5.6 million. These stock and



options, many of which were granted when stock prices were much lower than they are now, stand to create a shower of wealth when CEOs cash them in, reports the *USA TODAY*.

The highest paid of the CEOs analyzed by *USA TODAY* was Philippe Dauman, CEO of Viacom. Dauman was paid \$84.5 million, which was not only a 149 percent increase from 2009, but 11 percent greater than the No. 2 on the list, Ray Irani, the CEO of Occidental Petroleum, took home \$76.1 million, up 142 percent from the previous year.

## While Workers' Pay Stalls

### Corporate Loopholes

Is your tax refund going to be anywhere close to \$1.9 billion? That's how much Bank of America got from the Internal Revenue Service last year.

Bank of America wasn't alone, either. Check out this list of the top five tax avoiders:

- 1 **ExxonMobil** made \$19 billion in profits in 2009. Exxon not only paid **no federal income taxes**, it actually received a **\$156 million rebate** from the IRS, according to its SEC filings.
- 2 **Bank of America** received a **\$1.9 billion tax refund** from the IRS last year, although it made **\$4.4 billion in profits** and received a **bailout** from the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department of nearly **\$1 trillion**.
- 3 Over the past five years, while **General Electric** made **\$26 billion in profits** in the United States, it received a **\$4.1 billion refund** from the IRS.
- 4 **Chevron** received a **\$19 million refund** from the IRS last year after it made **\$10 billion in profits** in 2009.
- 5 **Boeing**, which received a **\$30 billion contract** from the Pentagon to build 179 airborne tankers, got a **\$124 million refund** from the IRS last year.

Imagine what those billions of dollars in refunds to corporate giants could have done if they were used for job creation or invested in our communities.

# Notable Quotes

**"This is our Pearl Harbor of workers' rights. The governor has really been out of bounds with a sneak attack in the middle of the night without any public notice, without any input from many hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites who have expressed their views. It's a sad day for Wisconsin."**

*> Wisconsin State Senator Tim Carpenter (D)*

**"The Republican budget proposal, by contrast, is simply a shameful wealth transfer from working people to corporate CEOs. It does not make a significant dent in the deficit. It is a fraud on the American people."**

*> AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka*

**"We will never forget this tragedy. Because only by remembering will we continue our vigilance to make sure that this type of tragedy never happens again."**

*> Labor Secretary Hilda Solis at a memorial service on April 5 in Whitesville, W. Va., at a service held on the first anniversary of the tragedy at Massey Energy's Upper Big Branch mine.*

**"This recession was not caused by them. Working America—firefighters, teachers and nurses—are not responsible for the reckless actions of Wall Street, which led to this crisis in the first place. I also strongly object to efforts by politicians who try to use the current economic downturn to strip American workers of their rights—the right to negotiate working conditions that are safe, the right to negotiate due process protections against being fired arbitrarily, and the right to negotiate fair pay for an honest day's work."**

*> U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Maryland)*

**"The American Dream is being stolen by big corporations and billionaires like the Koch brothers [who] are spending outrageous sums to elect Republicans, including tea party extremists....Their agenda is to deregulate insurance companies, polluters, banks and mortgage companies so they can run roughshod over the middle class."**

*> Health Care for America Now (HCAN) Executive Director Ethan Rome*

**"We cannot afford \$1 trillion worth of tax cuts for every millionaire and billionaire in our society. And I refuse to renew them again."**

*> President Barack Obama, in a April 13 budget speech that countered Republican budget plans with what he said was a more balanced approach that relies in part on tax increases for the wealthy as well as on spending cuts.*



## CLC Deplores Republican Legislation Attacking Public Workers in Wisconsin

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) condemns legislation passed by the Republican majority in the Wisconsin Assembly that strips 175,000 public sector workers of their collective bargaining rights. The CLC also stands in solidarity with thousands of our sisters and brothers in the United States who continue to offer resistance to this alarming initiative.

The legislation in Wisconsin was introduced by Republican Governor Scott Walker and supported by big business. The legislation requires public workers to pay more toward their pensions and health insurance, sacrifices which they had already agreed to accept. But the Assembly has gone far beyond that, removing the rights of workers to bargain collectively. There will no longer be negotiations for working conditions, health and safety and worker's compensation provisions, leave entitlements, seniority rules, equality provisions, grievance procedures, representation rights, pensions and benefits. Real salary increases will have to be put to a referendum.

The goal is to destroy the labour movement and to shred public services. The legislation will also require union members to hold annual votes on whether to remain in the union, and make the payment of union dues voluntary.



In addition, the legislation proposes to cut benefits to Medicaid for all retirees and other beneficiaries of public health care, and to sell key public utilities.

On behalf of the 3.2 million unionized workers in Canada, the CLC deplores this attack on workers' rights in a jurisdiction that was the cradle of public sector bargaining in the U.S. The CLC is appalled at the attempts made by Wisconsin Republicans to discredit public sector workers in the state and to blame them for the fiscal pressures faced by all levels of government. This is not only immoral, but is contrary to U.S. commitments to international law and to the International Labour Organization.

These actions will destroy a social contract that has stood the test of time and could have grave repercussions for all workers and citizens well beyond the state. If other jurisdictions view this as a model for how an employer can act, then all workers in the

state, private as well as public, unionized and non-unionized, are in peril.

It was not public sector workers and their collective agreements that caused the fiscal deficit faced by Wisconsin and other governments. The fiscal crisis has its roots in the financial crisis and resulting economic devastation that the U.S. has not yet recovered from. In

January 2011, a U.S. government Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission concluded that the economic crisis was caused by failures in government regulation, corporate mismanagement and irresponsible risk-taking in the financial sector. The Commission concluded that the financial crisis was completely avoidable.

Wisconsin's fiscal troubles will not be solved by stripping public sector workers of their rights. This legislation is designed to destroy unions over the long term. Despite massive opposition to this draconian legislation, Republican legislators have pursued their course, and other U.S. states are considering similar action. Such an assault on long accepted collective agreements would be disastrous for all workers and for citizens who depend on quality public services. The labour movement in the U.S. is determined to oppose this hostile agenda and the CLC stands in solidarity with our American brothers and sisters.

## Calif. Locals March and Rally in Solidarity

On April 4, BCTGM Locals 125 (San Leandro, Calif.) and 24 (San Francisco) attended several We Are One solidarity events. In Alameda County, Local 125 Financial Secretary Donna Scarano and Local 125 President Tina Davenport attended a rally in support of Wisconsin workers. In Contra Costa County, Local 125 Recording Secretary/Business Agent David Cheong participated in a march across the Alfred Zampa Memorial Bridge. And in San Mateo County, Local 125 joined the officers and members of Local 24 at a We Are One rally attended by hundreds of California union members and activists. Pictured here are photos of those various events.



▲ Pictured here (from left to right) is L. 125's Vice Pres./Bus. Agt. René Castillo, Pres. Tina Marie Davenport, 50-year member Roger Gutierrez, Fin. Secy.-Treas./Bus. Agt. Donna Scarano, L. 24 Bus. Agt. Oscar Hernandez and L. 125 Rec. Secy./Bus. Agt. David Cheong.



▲ L. 125 member Roger Gutierrez (left) and L. 24 Bus. Agt. Oscar Hernandez.



▲ Pictured here at the San Mateo event is L. 125's Vice Pres./Bus. Agt. René Castillo, Fin. Secy.-Treas./Bus. Agt. Donna Scarano, Pres. Tina Marie Davenport, Rec. Secy./Bus. Agt. David Cheong and 50-year member Roger Gutierrez; L. 24's Fin. Secy.-Treas. Joseph Biringier, Bus. Agt. Oscar Hernandez and Bus. Agt. Humberto Gomez.

▼ L. 125 Fin. Secy.-Treas./Bus. Agt. Donna Scarano and L. 125 Pres. Tina Marie Davenport.



▲ L. 125 Rec. Secy./Bus. Agt. David Cheong (right) was among hundreds of union members to participate in a march across the Alfred Zampa Memorial Bridge in Contra Costa County.

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**1**

## **AT&T is union.**

AT&T is the only national wireless company that is union. Verizon Wireless is not only not union, but has fiercely resisted employees' efforts to unionize.

**2**

## **15% union member discount.**

Union members save 15% off the regular monthly rate for individual and family plans on AT&T with the BCTGM Power/Union Plus AT&T discount. That means you could **save \$116.98\*** annually with an iPhone from AT&T. Visit [UnionPlus.org/ATT](http://UnionPlus.org/ATT) to save.

**3**

## **AT&T's network.**

PC World reports that on average AT&T's network delivered significantly faster speeds than the three other major U.S. wireless providers—Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon. AT&T's network also allows you to talk with someone and surf the web at the same time on the iPhone, while Verizon's will not.

**If you're going to use an iPhone (or any cell phone) wouldn't you rather save money, be on the fastest network and support the 40,000 union workers at AT&T?**

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# SAFE JOBS SAVE LIVES

**Workers Memorial Day - April 28, 2011**

See pages 8 & 9 inside!